

because it had been 21 years since we'd seen each other and he didn't know what to say, and other dead people come to me and ask me to tell their loved ones they miss them but if I did they'd think me crazy, or worse, an extortionist. I wish I could make this ability, or affliction, whichever, willful and beneficial to peoplekind, could summon forth Rachel Carson and Lincoln to save the world, Nietzsche and Einstein to tell us The Next Important Thing, Buddha and Christ to light the way, but best of all, Elvis to teach us to sing, drive a white Cadillac car, and play a rock 'n' roll electric guitar.

#### SERGEANT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

It's hard to believe today how bellybuttons once drove men crazy in 1965, the raison d'être, original sin of go-go bars when French bikinis were banned on state beaches and tv and I wouldn't wear one at first, wore leotards or costumes showing just a bit of midriff, Abner's 5's bosses not caring, a shy new girl gave the place class but it drove the guys crazy, one guy offering me one day \$20 to show him my belly button. I don't have one, I told him, but he didn't believe me, I'm a Martian, I told him, but he didn't believe that either, just got drunker and drunker and yelled all afternoon, Hey baby, lemme see yer bellybutton, but I kept saying no. It's all so silly nowadays. I sure could've used that \$20 then. I still could.

#### DIVERSIFIED

He wanted to make me a star. Then why are you looking for one in a sleazy beer bar? "Ah," he said, lighting his cigar, "you're cautious. I admire that in a woman."



No, I said, waving cigar smoke  
out of my face, I'm cynical,  
suspicious, and paranoid.

"Hey," he said, "and you got a  
sense of humor, real comedienne ability,  
the next Carole Lombard."

No, I said, pouring his imported beer  
into a glass, I'm a hateful bitch,  
hating every minute of my  
miserable existence as a go-go girl.

"Wow, a realist. I can just see you now  
in an Ingmar Bergman film.  
Another Liv Ullmann."  
He surveyed my facade with his thumb.

And I walked around the bar, sucking  
in my stomach, sticking out my chest,  
arched my eyebrows in the mirror,  
and when I went to the Ladies Room  
he left, leaving on my tiptray  
one dime and a business card that read:

"Walter B. Somethingorother, Diversified."

No telephone number.

No address.

#### WALLFLOWER

The Playgal Club owner had photos  
of all of us go-go girls  
wallpapering the wall of his office,  
8 x 10 glossies of all of us,  
past and present, bending over  
or turning around showing off  
tits or asses or our faces  
marabou or leopard skin draped  
across our boobs pooching over the top

all of us photographed  
by a guy older than our fathers  
who called himself the Silver Fox  
and still wore a 1954 bowtie and crewcut  
and fancied himself a hot loverman  
a Hugh Hefner harem-keeper  
instead of a dirty old man  
rutting around shirtless